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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

February 1963

ROR

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. He declared that God had conferred upon him the dignity of Prophethood. He claimed that he had received this blessing through being a perfect follower of the Holy Prophet. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the Expected Messenger of all the religions of the world. He explained that God had raised him for the purpose of re-establishing the dominion of Islam and to shed light upon the true teachings of the Holy Quran. With him, in fact, had started a new era, the renaissance of Islam.

One startling historical disclosure he made, was that Jesus Christ had escaped death at the crucifixion and had subsequently travelled to Kashmir, where his tomb still exists at Srinagar.

When Hazrat Ahmad published his claims and revelations received by him, he encountered a severe storm of opposition from all quarters and all communities. In spite of this opposition God began to strengthen his voice and people began to follow him. At the time of his death in 1908, he had gathered around him a group of faithful and staunch followers not only in India but also in other countries, numbering hundreds of thousands.

After his death in 1908, he was succeeded by the Late Hazrat Maulvi Nuruddin Sahib as his First Khalifa. At his death in 1914, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, was elected as his second Khalifa.

He particularly undertook a vast programme of the propagation of Islam, and under his guidance, the Movement is carrying on vigorous missionary activities throughout the world. There is now a network of Ahmadiyya missions in almost every free country.

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Printed at the Nusrat Art Press, Rabwah
and published by M. Masud Ahmad B.A. for the Sadar Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya,
Rabwah, West Pakistan.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM.

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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Annual subscriptions including Packing and Postage :

1.	Pakistan, India and Ceylon :	... Rs. 10
2.	England and other Sterling Areas	... £1.
3.	U. S. A. and other Dollar Areas :	... $3.00

Notes :—All Cheques and Drafts should be on any bank in Pakistan. But if these are on any foreign bank, a collection charge of 50 cents for U.S.A. and 4 sh. for U. K. should be sent in addition to the subscription as above.

CONTENTS

		Pages
1.	An Extraordinary Heavenly Phenomenon *The Promised Messiah.*	... 45
2.	The Buddha and His Original Teachings *M. Masud Ahmad.*	... 48
3.	The Authenticity of the New Testament as the Modern Christian Writers find it. *S. Z. A. Shah*	... 67
4.	Islam—The Need of All Times. *Ch. Abdus Salam Akhtar, M.A.*	... 79

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

RABWAH, WEST PAKISTAN

Vol. LVII **FEBRUARY 1963** **No II**

An Extraordinary Heavenly Phenomenon

From the writings of the Promised Messiah peace and blessings of Allah be on him—rendered into English by A. R. Khan Bengalee.

After establishing the truth that the falling of shooting stars, in large numbers, heralds the advent of some prophet or his vice-gerent, or gives the tidings of some great victory of Faith, the Promised Messiah, *peace and blessings of Allah be on him*, proceeds to say that his own advent was heralded by such Heavenly Phenomena. He says :

At the very out-set of my mission, I received a revelation which has been mentioned in my book *Burahin-i-Ahmadiyya* at page 238. The revelation is as follows :

يا احمد بارك الله فيك مارميت اذ رميت ولكن الله رمىٰ
الرحمن علم القرآن لتنذر قوماً ماانذر أباءهم ولتستبين

سبیل المجرمین ۔ قل انی امرت وانا اول المومنین ۔

"O Ahmad, God has showered His blessings on thee, and the thing thrown by thee was not really thrown by thee, it was God Who threw it (i.e. the movement started by you was not started by you, It was God Who started it). God has blessed thee with the knowledge of the Quran so that thou mayest warn or admonish those people whose forefathers had not been warned or admonished, and that the guilty persons' path become open, (i.e. their guilt be exposed), in other words, the good-natured become separated and distinguished from the evil-natured and arrogant ones. Proclaim to the people that thou hast been sent by God, and that thou art the first of the believers".

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After the above mentioned revelation many other Signs were manifested by God. One of those signs is that on the 28th November, 1885, i.e., on the night preceding the 28th November, 1885, there was such a tremendous display of the movement of meteors or shooting stars that I never before saw the like of it throughout my life ; and so numerous were the flames that were shooting forth in all directions in the space that I find no simile in this world to describe the phenomenon presented by them.

I remember that, at that time, the following verse was repeatedly revealed to me :—

ما رمیت اذ رمیت ولکن اللہ رمی

(i.e., it was not you who threw it, it was God Who threw it, So, the رمی (i.e. the throwing of the gravel by the Holy Prophet) has a great resemblance with the رمی or throwing of the shooting stars.

The display of the movement of the meteors on the night preceding November 28, 1885, was so vast and extensive that it was witnessed by the whole world, and was published, as a

marvellous phenomenon, in all the famous news papers of Europe, America and Asia. People might take it for a meaningless phenomenon, but, as for myself, I can swear by God, the Exalted, that I witnessed the show with the deepest attention, and enjoyed it, deriving the greatest joy and pleasure from it. For a very long time, my eyes continued gazing at this scene. This display of the shooting stars started from the very evening, and I went on seeing it with great delight because of the glad tidings revealed to me. It was instilled into my heart by revelation that it was a Sign for me.

After this phenomenon, the people of Europe were shown the Star that had appeared at the advent of Messiah (Jesus). It was inspired into my heart that this Star, too, was another Sign of my truth.*

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**Aina-i-Kamalat-i-Islam, pp. 109-111.*

The Buddha and His Original Teachings

M. Masud Ahmad

Christianity and the Religion of Christ seem to be synonymous. As a matter of fact, they are quite different. The religion which Christ brought was something entirely different from the characteristic beliefs and religious customs upon which the present day Christianity is based. This is not said by non-Christian scholars only. Every Christian scholar who has tried to examine the present day Christianity in the light of history without prejudice and objectively, has reached the conclusion that the two are diametrically opposed to each other. For instance, Mr. Walter E. Bundy, once professor of English Bible at the University of De Pauw expresses the same difference between the present day Christianity and the religion of Christ in the following words.

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"In its history, early and late, the Christian faith has gone through various developments, transitions, alterations, eliminations, additions, accretions outgrowths, aftergrowths and overgrowths which seperate and distinguish it very clearly from the simple yet profound faith that possessed the soul of Jesus.

"The person of Jesus became the perennial source of speculation wherever Christianity struck permanent root. About his person there evolved great systems of thought, elaborate and intricate structures of belief, theologies and christologies, schemes of salvation, doctrines and dogmas, creeds and confessions. Faith became fixed and formal, beliefs became impersonal and official, and with officiality of belief came orthodoxy of opinion. The historical Jesus was enveloped in a mystical, mythical and metaphysical atmosphere that hid him from the eyes of even the believing Christian world. Theology and Philosophy in Christian garb over-

grew and obscured the religion of Jesus, the simple yet strong sources of spiritual life which he knew".[1]

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What Mr. Walter E. Bundy has written about Christianity can equally well be said about Buddhism. If we replace the words 'Christianity' with 'Buddhism' and 'Jesus' with 'Buddha', there will not be any loss of truth in the passage. What is true of Christianity is equally true of Buddhism. The modern Buddhism and the teachings of the great Asian reformer, the Buddha, have no resembelance at all.

Compilation of the Tri-pitaka

The prevailing Buddhism is based upon its canon called the Tri-pitaka. Tri-pitaka is a compound word meaning Three Baskets. Although this canon is said to consist of the Buddha's dialogues, sermons, instructions and commands, it cannot be accepted as his real and unalloyed teachings. The most important and basic reason for this is that he has not left any written record of his teachings whatsoever. He preached and lectured for 45 years. After his death, numerous councils of followers tried to arrange his teachings ; but all these efforts remained confined to oral arrangement and tabulation. Not even in one council they were systematically written down and recorded. These successive councils only decided, through discussion, about the accuracy and correctness of, first, what the Buddha's leading disciples then their disciples and then their disciples's disciples remembered of his teachings and sayings. These councils, which are said to be three in number, were not held one after the other after the Buddha's death. They cover a span of about 250 years.

The first council was held at Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha, in the first monsoon after the Buddha's death, in 483 B.C. The immediate cause for its being held was that where as most of the bhikshus were extremely grieved at the Buddha's death, a bhikshu named Subhadda, who had joined the Sangha very late, was very happy. He addressed the saddened bhikshus :

> "Friends regret not, cease weeping. Now, that the Buddha has passed away we are left our own masters. We could now act and move as we please. You will do better to rejoice rather than be sorry at your liberation".[2]

This astonished bhikshus. Many opposed this tendency very strongly, and demanded that a council be held so that the authentic teachings of the Buddha may be well defined to prevent anyone from going astray and misleading others. Subhadda misunderstood one of the last advices which the Buddha had given shortly before his death. The Buddha had told the bhikshus near his death that in future they should seek guidance from their own selves ; and that they should not look towards others because their salvation did not rest in anyone else but was hidden in their own selves. I shall explain what it really means somewhere else. Here, I only want to point out that the above mentioned saying of Subhadda was cosidered as heresy by the rest of the bhikshus, and that they felt a need for holding an immediate council to refute it and to secure and safeguard the purity of the Buddha's teachings which he had imparted from time to time in his sermons. So, a council was held under the patronage of Ajatasattu, the Rajah of Magadha, which was presided over by Buddha's famous disciple, Maha Kassapa. The Buddha had appointed him his successor, in a way, when, near his death, he declared him to be the best of all his disciples. This council was attended by 500 bhikshus. The Buddha's closest and most beloved disciple, Ananda, who was his personal attendant related those teachings of his master which were latter on added to Tri-pitaka as a separate collection under the name of the Sutta. Another disciple, Venerable Upali, narrated the Buddha's instructions about organizational matters. These became a part of the Tri-pitaka under the heading of the Vinaya. Tradition says that Maha Kassapa narrated the third part of the Tri-pitaka, which is known as the Abhidhamma. But the book Cullavagga, a history of the first two councils, does not mention that Maha Kassapa described any part of the Buddha's teachings at the first council. So, this council whose meetings were held for seven months continuously, established

the text of the Sutta and the Vinaya, the first two parts of the Tripitaka. It requires special mention, and the Buddhist scholars themselves agree to it, that not a single word of the proceedings of the council was written down. The council established and fixed the texts of the Sutta and the Vinaya orally only, and made it incumbent on the bhikshus to memorise the sayings and instructions of the Buddha in the same order. The second thing to be particularly noted about this council is that Ananda told the council that the Buddha had permitted to leave certain of his orders about the organization of the Sangha, but that he did not remember at that time which of the instructions described by him were those. The majority were of the opinion that under these circumstances all the instructions should be deemed as essential. So, according to the unanimous decision of the council all the instructions and orders were declared as essential.[3]

Exactly a hundred years latter i.e. in 383 B. C. a second council was held at Vaisali, 27 miles in the north of Patna, under the patronage of Kalasoka the Raja of Magadha. This was attended by 700 bhikshus and continued for about 8 months. It was presided upon by the Venerable Revata. It was held because after the first council a section of bhikshus, disagreeing with the decision of the first council had formed a different set of principles of discipline which they wanted to establish. These people were called the Mahasaghikas. When in the 4th century B.C. the Mahasaghikas started gaining power and a clear split among the bhikshus became imminent, the leading bhikshus conferred amongst themselves and the second council was held in 383 B.C. The Mahasaghikas were declared as heretics and turned out of the Sangha. The Sutta and the Vinaya were re-examined and were re-establishd after considerable discussion. This establishment and demarcation of the text was, like the first one was, also oral. No part of the Sutta or of the Vinaya was set-down in writing. The bhikshus were again exhorted to memorise these two texts accurately and to convey them to the coming generations. Some time after the second council a great political upheavel took place in Northern India, which ultimately made an end of all the free states of the area and replaced them by a single big and powerful government.

Chandra Gupta Mauria, a high officer in the army of Rajah Nanda of Magadha, killed his Rajah and usurped his throne. Gradually, he extended the boundaries of his kingdom to enclose almost the whole of the country. He ruled for 24 years and was succeeded by his son Bindusara. In 269 B.C. Asoka succeeded his father Bindusara. Although Chandra Gupta and Bindusara followed the Brahmanistic religion they were not unkind to the Buddhist monks. But Asoka, a few years after his coronation adopted Buddhism openly, and tried his best to propagate this religion. By that time the bhikshus were divided into numerous sects. Some traditions report their number to be 18. Asoka saw this split amongst the bhikshus, and especially the dangerously deteriorating relations between the traditional and orthodox sect and a new sect, the Thirthakas. To unite them once again, he called a council of all sects of bhikshus. This council was held at Patna in 247 B.C. It is known as the Patna council. About 1000 bhikshus of different sects attended it and its meetings were held for nine months. This council has the same place in the history of Buddhism which the council of Nicaea occupies in the history of Christianity. The latter was called by Emperor Constantine to remove the mutual differences of the various Christian sects in 325 A.D. Arius and his companions were declared heretics and put out of the pale of Chiristianity. This council also laid foundation of the prevailing Christianity by formulating the Christian dogma in definite words. Exactly in the same way the Patna council expelled about 60000 Thirthakas from the Sangha as heretics, and adding a third part, Abidhamma, in addition to the Sutta and the Vinaya, to the Buddhist canon gave the name of the Tri-pitaka to this collection. But all this arrangement was oral and not a single word was written down.

Some research scholars think that the Tri-pitaka were written down at the third council. The argument is that a few years before the third council Asoka had some tablets inscribed and erected at certain places, therefore, there is no reason why the Tri-pitaka should not have been recorded in writing at the Patna council. The second argument they put forth is that when, in the years immediately after 247 B.C., Asoka's son Mahindra went to Ceylon to preach Buddhism he had taken a copy of the

Tri-pitaka in Pali with him. But this is not supported by the ancient Buddhistic sources; only this can be indirectly gathered that he had taken with him some of the exegesis written by that time. Although there is no clear proof of it, it is just possible that the exegesis may have been written down; because not being the Buddha's own words like the Tri-pitaka it was not incumbent upon the bhikshus to commit them to memory. Anyhow it is a fact, which is accepted by some Buddhist scholars too, that the whole of the Tri-pitaka was not committed to writing even at the Patna council. Asoka himself or an individual bhikshu might have had a part kept safe in writing for his own personal convenience later on. But we do not have certain and definite proof for the contention that the Tri-pitaka was preserved in writing according to a systematic plan at the Patna council or even in the years immediately after it.

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When was the first complete collection of the Tri-pitaka written down then? One well established point of view, which is held by some Buddhist scholars too, is that a complete collection of the Tri-pitaka was recorded in writing in Ceylon and not in India for the first time. And it was done so after 43 B.C. i.e, 200 years after the Patna council and about 450 years after the Buddha's death. It should also be noted that on this first—ever occasion, it was written down in Sinhalese and not in the Pali language.

Mahindra, the son of Asoka, in addition to two close relatives of his had also taken four expert and learned bhikshus with him to Ceylon. These bhikshus made the local bhikshus memorise the text of the Tri-pitaka.

In this fashion the text of the Tri-pitaka was orally handed down from one generation to another in Ceylon. In 43 B.C. the Sinhalese kings, who had patronised Buddhism, lost power. The Tamil kings came into power after their decline. These kings had no interest in Buddhism. So, in view of the political unstablity in the country and realising that Buddhism had lost the royal support, the Buddhist scholars, who were known as Mahatheras, resolved to safeguard

the Tri-pitaka by writing it down. Therefore, with the help of the bhikshus who remembered the Pali text, it was translated into Sinhalese and put into writing. Dr. Walpola Rahula of Ceylon, in his book 'History of Buddhism in Ceylon', basing himself on the authority of ancient Ceylonese histories 'Mahavamsa' and 'Dipavamsa', has this to say about the writing down of the Tri-pitaka for the first time in history :-

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> "From 43 B.C. for fourteen years five Tamils ruled in succession at Anuradhapura. King Vattagamani lay in hiding in remote places during the period ..... The Mahatheras and the leaders of the Sinhalese saw that the future of Buddhism was in danger. Its very existence was threatened. There was no Sinhalese king to support it. The continuation of the oral tradition of the three Pitakas which had so far been handed down orally from teacher to pupil appeared no longer possible under the prevailing adverse circumstances. The primary concern of the Sangha during this tragic period was to preserve the teaching of the Buddha which they valued above all else. Therefore far-seeing Mahatheras, under the patronage of a local chief, assembled at Aluvihara at Matale, and committed to writing the whole of the Tri-pitaka with the commentaries thereon for the first time in history in order that the true doctrine might endure."[4]

Moreover, Dr. Walapola Rahula, inspite of admitting the possibility that some of the commentaries on the Tri-pitaka might have been present in book form even in the 3rd century B.C., thinks that the Tri-pitaka itself was not at all written down before the first century B.C. He says :

> "In Ceylon, the Sinhalese commentaries in book form on the Tri-pitaka seem to have been in use soon after Buddhism was introduced into the Island in the 3rd century B.C., though in fact the writing down of the Tri-pitaka itself took

place only in the first century B.C."[5]

So, it is obvious that even according to the Buddhist scholars themselves the collection of Tri-pitaka was kept safe in the memories of the bhikshus only for aboat 450 years after the death (483 B.C.) of the Buddha. During this period councils were held after every 100 or 150 years which amended, cancelled from or added to the Tri-pitaka. This process of amending, cancellation or addition by the councils went on until the Tri-pitaka was committed to writing in 43 B.C. for the first time in history. And this reduction to writing was not done in its original language, Pali, but in Sinhalese, the language of Ceylon.

Regular new additions were made to Tri-pitaka for another 500 years. Then it was re-rendered into Pali from Sinhalese. And in this way, after about 950 years of the Buddha's death, the first written copy of the Tri-pitaka in Pali language came into existence. The manner in which this first Pali copy came into existence is also very interesting. Due to the efforts of Asoka, Buddhism not only spread into Ceylon and other near-by areas but even in India itself very large numbers of people embraced it in a short time. Large and rapid conversions seemed to be a source of strength for Buddhism; but in reality this proved to be the reason for its decline in India. Because of the royal patronage for the new religion people started embracing it without really shedding the deeply engraved influences of Brahmanism upon their minds, thoughts, actions and way of life. The result was that after Asoka, with the passage of time, Buddhism gradually started merging with Brahmanism. And at last according to a deliberately thougt out plan of the Brahmans it had almost completely lost its separate and permanent entity in the 5th century A.D. The teachings of the Tri-pitaka which had been safe in the minds of the bhikshus only upto now became so unremembered that scholars having a thorough knowledge of them became almost extinct. Confronted with this desperate situation Buddhaghosa, a well known Buddhist, went to Ceylon in the 5th century A.D.[6] After years of hard work he re-rendered the Tri-pitaka and its commentaries into Pali from Sinhalese. And in this way the first ever Pali copy of the Tri-pitaka came into existence. What changes it had suffered and what aditions had

been made to it can be judged from the following words of Dr. Walpola Rahula.[7]

> "Although there is evidence to prove the growth of the Pali scriptures during the early centuries of Buddhism in India and Ceylon, there is no reason to doubt that their growth was arrested and the text was finally fixed in the 5th century A.C. whem the Sinhalese commentaries on the Tripitaka were translated into Pali by Buddhaghosa".[7]

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From the above mentioned details about the tabulation and collection of the Tri-pitaka it becomes quite obvious that its prevailing Pali text which took its final form 950 years after the death of the Buddha is not at all the exact copy of the original text. As a matter of fact, it is a re-translation of a translation. And in these 950 years quite a lot of amendments, cancellations ann additions were made to it. Moreover the local influences of Ceylon and touches of Brahmanism also intruded in and coloured it. In these circumstances it cannot be accepted that the contents of the Tri-pitaka are a faithful reproduction of the Buddha's real teachings. These can be called the basis of the present day Buddhism but on no account can we call them original teachings of the Buddha. Neither can we say, with any amount of certainty, that the beliefs and tennets, described in the Tri-pitaka are exactly the same as preached by the Buddha in his own life time.

Western Research and its Conclusions.

As this altered and amended text of the Tri-pitaka was in Pali, the non-Buddhist world knew nothing about its contents even as recently as the middle of the 19th century. In the later half of the 19th century some Western scholars, after having mastered the Pali language, started translating it in English, and, in this way, for the first time, the rest of the world came to know what was written in it and what were the basic beliefs and attitudes of the prevailing Buddhism. But in the very beginning the Western scholars committed the mistake of accepting the Tri-pitaka as authentic and true in its entirety. They accepted its contents as a true picture of, and entirely based upon, the

teachings of the Buddha. Some of them did point out that it was not necessary that everything mentioned in the Tri-pitaka consisted of the Buddha's real teachings. But they emphasised the fact that as 2400 years had passed since the death of the Buddha there was no other way of ascertaining his real teachings. Under these circumstances, they felt, there was nothing for them but to accept the Tri-pitaka as the original and authentic teachings of the Buddha. Professor Max Muller (1823-1900), the famous orientalist of the 19th century, in the introduction to his translation of Dhammapada, one of thc books of the Tripitaka, raised the question whether it was possible for us to decide which parts of it consisted of the Buddha's real teachings and which parts were added later on. Answering this question he says:-

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> "My belief is that, in general, all honest inquirers must oppose a 'No' to this question, and confess that it is useless to try to cast a glance beyond the boundaries of the Buddhist Canon. What we find in the Canonical books in the so-called 'Three Baskets' is orthodox Buddhism and the doctrine of Buddha, similarly as we must accept in general whatever we find in the four Gospels as Orthodox Christianity and the doctrine of Christ".

For a long time this view of Professor Muller was accepted as correct in the West and Western scholars considered the Tri-pitaka as the authentic teachings of the Buddha. But when they studied it carefully and examined its contents in the light of the peculiar condions and history of the Buddha's age and time they felt that it was quite possible to find out his real teachings. they felt, if a proper study were made on scientific lines, it could be ascertained as to what was the Buddha's real *Gayan* and message he had brought for the Hindu society of the time as compared with the teachings of the Tri-pitaka. Some of the scholars even went to the length of calling Professor Muller's idea that the teachings of the Tri-pitaka alone must be considered the authentic teachings of the Buddha as down right silly. Mr. K. Cook M.A. LL.D. was of the same opinion and he, in 1886, in his book 'The Fathers of

Jesus', strongly criticising Professor Max Muller's point of view, wrote that it was a result of a very regretable resignation to difficulties. He further pointed out that it was not impossible to reach the real facts by critically examining the views put forth in the Tri-pitaka; but like other scientific studies it demanded a lot of diligence, patience and perseverance. In the same book he said:

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"This is a most lame and impotent conclusion, and in each case in which an accepted Christian text has been discovered to be the gloss of a commentator, and not found in the earliest manuscripts, and is at the same time manifestly at variance from the doctrine of the Founder, Professor Muller's arguement can evidently be reduced to an absurdity. Had he said simply that the Three Baskets are the accepted scriptures of orthodox Buddhism, the Four Gospels of orthodox Christianity, he would have uttered that which, if a truism, is at least a fact.

"It is disappointing to find a distinguished student of comparative religious lore so resigning himself to the abandonment of a difficulty. It must, however, be allowed that Western Civilization is still very young in philosophic experience. Doctrinal fetters have long cramped the mind, and prevented its expansion in the ethical direction. Moreover, our country has not long emerged from insular barbarism, and four centuries ago was almost without culture in foreign languages and foreign thought. The time is not long past when, if a few bones of extinct animals had been placed before a naturalist, and he were asked to reconstruct the whole anatomy upon their basis, he would have smiled with the superior wisdom of ignorance upon his inquirer's absurd folly. Now he will not only build up the probable anatomical form, but certainly separate from bones placed before him such as do not consist with the others but

belong to creatures of a different type.

> "May we not hope, therefore, that as sympathetic study of ancient philosophy progresses, there may be found to grow a faculty of distinguishing between characteristic expressions of thought, as is done with different varieties of bones; and that to body forth the thoughts of a distinctive thinker with more or less fullness and certitude, we shall require but to have before us authentic relics known to have proceeded from him? For the criticism of thought, time must be allowed as for other scientific studies".[8]

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When Professor Max Muller's ideas were so strongly challenged by academic circles, there developed, in Europe a strong tendency of studying the gradual collection and arrangement of the Tri-pitaka and other ancient Buddhist literature objectively. Research scholars throughly re-examined all this literature. After extensive and deep studies they reached the conclusion that the real teachings of the Buddha could not be the same as have been ascribed to him in this very extensive literature which has been flourishing for centuries. Sir Monier Williams (1819-1899), describes the result of his researches on the question in these words briefly :-

> "It cannot therefore surprise us if Buddhism developed into apparently contradictory systems in different countries and under varying climatic conditions. In no two countries did it preserve the same features. Even in India, the land of its birth, it had greatly changed during the first ten centuries of its prevelence. So much so that had it been possible for its founder to reappear upon earth in the fifth centuy after Christ, he would have failed to recognise his own child, and would have found that his own teaching had not escaped the operation of law which experience proves to be universal and inevitable".[9]

Theodore Kern expressed the same thought in clear and

unambiguous words that the original teachings of the Buddha could not be the same as given in the Tri-pitaka and other Buddhist literature. He says :

> "The more we try to remove the difficulty (i.e. in accounting for certain doctrines) the more we are driven to the suspicion that original Buddhism was not exactly that of canonical books".[10]

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Mrs. Rhys Davids, the president of Pali Text Society of London was one of the most well known of the scholars who made a critical study of Buddhism in the beginning of the 20th century. She, after having studied the Pali literature directly and in the original, declared the Tri-pitaka as interpolated and altered. She not only said this but also emphasised that, even now, a deep and careful study of the Tri-pitaka could reveal what the Buddha might have said and what he might not have said. She did not stop here but in a number of her articles she refuted numerous views and beliefs which were ascribed to the Buddha. With a very intelligent and workmanlike analysis of these views and beliefs she has proved that in the conditions and circumstances of the 6th century B.C., and with temperament and natural tendencies he had, the Buddha could not possibly have preached these views and beliefs. Although I do not fully agree with all the conclusions of Mrs. Rhys Davids, her diligence and extensive study of the subject are beyond doubt. She devoted most of her life to the critical study of the Tri-pitaka and other Buddhist literature, and her researches have clearly proved that it would be a great mistake and in the countenance of established facts to equate the present day Buddhism with the real teachings of the Buddha. Although she accepted the possibilty of the Tri-pitaka having been committed to writing 350 years after the Buddha's death, (which is not right), she did not accept the present day Tri-pitaka as the exact and true picture of his original teachings. I quote from some of her studies here. Talking of the interpolations and alterations in the Tri-pitaka, she says :

> "We have in the Buddhist (Pali) scriptures a

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threefold thesarus of accretions, of gradually collectd 'sayings', which were first uttered in a bookless world and, for a period of perhaps four centuries were repeated in a bookless world. The repeaters were not so much live books as live pamphlets or tracts only, nor were their respective monastic centres, with perhaps one exception, living libraries of more than one group of such tracts. No centre, let alone individual repeater, could have a knowledge of the Three Pitakas such as we can have here and now.....

"As to relative perfection of Indian memorising, here also we should not accept, for Buddhist amateurs, that which was among Brahmans a professional, in a way, heriditary art. There is much evidence that all that mobile lip-repeating needed rectification from time to time. And the rectifying meant this: that the rectifying editors, capable and influential teachers in collating the various spoken versions, adapted these to fit and express the view they themselves had come to hold of a given doctrine. And in so adapting, they would tend to re-word as seemed better: to emphasise here, to reduce or even drop out there. In this way it was inevitable that the original Sayings, in wording, in emphasis, nay in matter, edged little by little even further from what they had once been".[11]

After having made clear the gradual compilation of and the consequent unavoidable interpolations and alterations in the Tri-pitaka she goes on to say:

"The Pali Canon holds a great mainfold of the true and the untrue, the worthy and the worse".[12]

Later on she points out that keeping in mind the intelligence and wisdom and the way of thinking of this great reformer of Asia we can decide for ourselves what teachings of the Tri-pitaka could have come from him and what he could

never have said under any conditions. She Says :

> "We are able to catch the reminiscences of the life and ministry of the Founder before they had, under the hand of time and changing values, become relatively much altered. That which in Christianity is reminiscence handed down unwritten during a few generations, has in Buddhism become almost purely legendary cult. Time and changing values have been much longer at work. The man, loyal friend and helper of man, has become a superman, object of awe and worship. The monastic cult grown great has superposed its own outlook, on life as 'ill', on the original message which sought to expand and sefeguard the teaching of immanence current in its day.....It was in this environment that the Pali Canon was built up, was finally closed, was finally written down. It is hardly strange that in it we find much, very much more of which we can plead : this and that he will not have taught, than we can find in the Christian Gospels".[13]

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From the above mentioned excerpts it becomes apparent that according to the researches of the scholars who have spent their life-times in the study of ancient Buddhist literature the present collection of the Tri-pitaka does not exactly and entirely correspond to the original teachings of the Buddha. As a matter of fact it had taken it 1000 long years to assume its present shape. And in these 1000 years it not only passed through various stages of translation and re-translation but was constantly revised, added to, and altered according to the changing values and new requirements of the time. Along with these changes and additions mushroom growth of new sects started taking place. Sects which not only differed from one another but which were sometimes mutually contradictory, too. Then, the research scholars are also agreed on the point that it may be difficult but is not impossible to ascertain the real and true teachings of the Buddha in the light of what we

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know of his life, the peculiar religious and social values of the time, the Buddha's traditional intelligence and wisdom itself and numerous other pointers and historical facts.

The need for fresh critical study

Under these circumstances it becomes incumbent on us to study the Tri-pitaka and other ancient Buddhist literature from a new angle of vision. So that we may come to know of the real teachings of the Buddha and the thick smoke screen of the centuries of fiction and imagination thrown round the reality and quality of the great spiritual revolution heralded by him may be lifted. This is also necessary because the efforts made by the Western scholars in this connection have been inadequate. Inspite of admitting that the Tri-pitaka cannot be called an exact and true copy of the original teachings of the Buddha, barring a few, most of the scholars have tried to prove, as far as possible, that its contents are his real teachings. This kind of new angle of studying the Buddhist literature has become quite easy now. It has become so because the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *may peace be on him*, using his prophetic vision, has thrown decisive light on the Buddha's station, his message, and the work done by him. This has opened a new horizon for research scholars. His decisive point of view about the Buddha and his teachings is of special significance. Before proving the truth of his views by the Tri-pitaka it would be better to describe this revolutionary idea in his own words.

In this connection the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam has propounded a very basic principle, namely, that all those ancient saints and holy men who are believed in, revered and loved by millions of people, and a very long time has passed on this belief of theirs, must have been positively the loved ones of God and sent by him. Basing himself upon this very principle he accepted the Buddha as a true messenger of God and considered it essential to honour and respect him. Describing this principle he says :—

"We never speak evil of the prophets of other

nations. Rather we hold the belief that all the prophets who have come in the world to the different nations and millions of people have accepted them and in any one part of the world their love and glory has taken roots and a long time has elapsed on this love and faith, this one argument is enough for their truth. Because, had they not been from God this acceptance would not have spread into the hearts of millions. God does never give the honour of his favoured ones to others. And if any false one wants to sit on their throne he is soon destroyed and perished."14

Accepting him as a true messenger of God on the above mentioned principle, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, *may peace be on him*, vehemently refuted the allegation that the Buddha was a Nastik. He proved that the Buddha in addition to believing in God also believed in heaven and hell, the day of Judgement, life after death, and the existence of angels. He also proves that the doctrine of transmigration is wrongly ascribed to him. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement explains that the doctrine of repeated births described by the Buddha, in reality means the different phases of this very life through which a man passes. Vehemently refuting the charge of atheism against the Buddha he writes :

> "I have already stated that the Buddha also believes in the existence of the Devil, so he also believes in hell and heaven, in angels and in the day of Judgement. And the charge that the Buddha did not believe in God is a pure fabrication. The Buddha did not believe in Vedanta and in corporeal gods of the Hindus. He criticises the Vedas a great deal. He does not believe in the existing Vedas. He regards them as corrupt and interpolated".15

Similarly explaining the meanings in which the Buddha believed in the doctrine of repeated births, he says :

> "It may be observed, however, that the Buddha

believed in the transmigration of the soul, but this 'transmigration' is not opposed to the teachings of the gospels. According to the Buddah, transmigration is of three kinds : (i) that the dying man's actions and efforts necessitate the coming into being of another body ; (ii) the kind of transmigration which the Tibetans believe to be operative among the Lamas, i.e. some part of the spirit of Buddha or Bodhi Satwa transmigrates into the Lama for the time being ; which means that his power, temper and spiritual qualities are transferred into such a Lama and that his spirit begins to animate the latter ; (iii) that in this very life man goes through different creations—there comes a time when he is, as it were, a bull ; when he grows in greed and evil, he becomes a dog, the first existence dying out, giving rise to another corresponding to the quality of his actions ; all these changes, however, take place in this very life. This creed is not opposed to the teachings of the gospels."16

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These views of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, *may peace be on him*, about Gotama the Buddha and his teachings are at variance not only with the views of the Western scholars but are also radically different from those held by followers of the Buddha himself. For instance the Hinayana sect of the present day Buddhism does not believe in the very existence of God. Its members say that the Buddha himself did not believe in God or soul.

Similarly, this sect does not believe in that explanation of the doctrine of repeated births which has been attributed to the Buddha by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. If we make a thorough study of the Tri-pitaka and other ancient Buddhist literature it can no longer remain hidden that these ideas and views although being entirely different from the prevailing Buddhism completely fit in the picture ; and it becomes obvious that what the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has described, exactly corresponds to the real teachings of the Buddha.

What is needed is that the Tri-pitaka and the old Buddhist literature should be viewed from a completely new angle of vision. In the articles to follow I shall try to prove that in the Tri-pitaka and other Buddhist literature, inspite of their being interpolated and altered, there are unmistakable pointers which fully support the views of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, (*may peace be on him*).

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The Authenticity of the New Testament as the Modern Christian Writers find it.

S. Z. A. Shah

Today there is a great competition in every sphere of life and the struggle for existence is probably in its acutest form. This has caused much nervous strain on human minds. The situation is more deteriorated because of the fear of another world war which appears inevitable and in which the most destructive types of weapons are likely to be used that may wipe out humanity from thickly populated areas, particularly in the so called 'developed countries' of the world. Apart from a heavy toll of life, an irrepairable loss to property is also visualized. Further more the future progeny of the remaining population of the affected areas will also be in a perpetual danger due to the effect of radio-active material of the atomic explosions on the generative systems of males as well as females. The very thought of these devastations has caused unbalance in the minds of even very sound and sane persons. There is no place to go to ; for, no area is beyond the reach of atom bombs : and there is no one whom to call for help because the strongest considered human being is too weak to protect himself what to think of protecting others ?

Yet there are certain religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam that tell us that there is a Supreme Living Power—God—Who created this universe and controls it. He guides all those people who have a desire for it and He alone has power to console, help and protect. Thus we read in the Old Testament;

> "I, even I, am the Lord ; and besides Me there is no saviour."[1]
>
> ".....There is no God beside Me, a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside Me"[2]

Thus to Him and Him alone we can go for protection and consolation of our souls. No sleeping pill, sedative or tranquillizer can have a real and more soothing and lasting effect than His hand—The hand that is hardest to smite the evil and

softest to protect the good. It is therefore, necessary for a seeker-after truth to find out the right path or religion that leads to God Almighty. Religion is exclusively one of God's Own departments, and, therefore, one should try to find Him through the ways revealed by Him to His chosen persons or the prophets and which are recorded in the sacred books. While turning to the latter it is imperative that such documents should be authentic and pure and not corrupted by human hands, otherwise one cannot be sure of the contents being trustworthy and true revelation from God.

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In the light of this procedure let us turn to Christianity which is (a) an off-shoot of Judaism or at least mostly depends upon the old Testament because of the 'testimonia' (b) also interconnected with Islam in several respects ; and (c) claims to have 840 million adherents in her fold forming at present the largest single religious group in the world.

It appears that the Jews were in the habit of corrupting their religious books, because we find severe warnings against such misdeeds e.g.

> "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you neither shall ye diminish *aught* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you"[3]
>
> and
>
> "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it : Thou shalt not add there to, nor diminish from it."[4]

and again,

> "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found liar."[5]

Inspite of these orders and warnings we read :

> "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof : because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."[6]

The fear of similar treatment towards the New Testament

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was also felt by the Christians, for we read,

> ".....If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book".[7]

Inspite of all this let us see the state of affairs in connection with the New Testament. The Christians had long believed that Scripture is free from corruption for,

> "If corruptions are present in Scripture, we have no firm foundation for our faith, no divine word upon which to rely. Either God was unable or He was unwilling to preserve the scriptures inviolate".[8]

Now here is a controversy about it among the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians :

> "It is apparent why the Catholic theoligians would insist that the Scriptures had been corrupted and why the Lutheran teachers would defend the integrity of the texts of Scripture so passionately. It was Catholic doctrine that the Vulgate version was the authentic text of Scripture, and that it owed its authenticity, to the authority of the Church. The controversy, therefore, centered not so much round the question of the integrity of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, as round the questions whether the original Greek or Hebrew writings or the Latin Vulgate was authentic. The Lutherans taught that because the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and New Testament in Greek, these original scriptures were authentic and must be the basis of all versions. Some of the dogmaticians thought that Hebrew was the original language spoken by God in Eden. Translations, because they are produced by men, are

not authentic, nor of infallible authority. They must always be judged according to the original text."[9]

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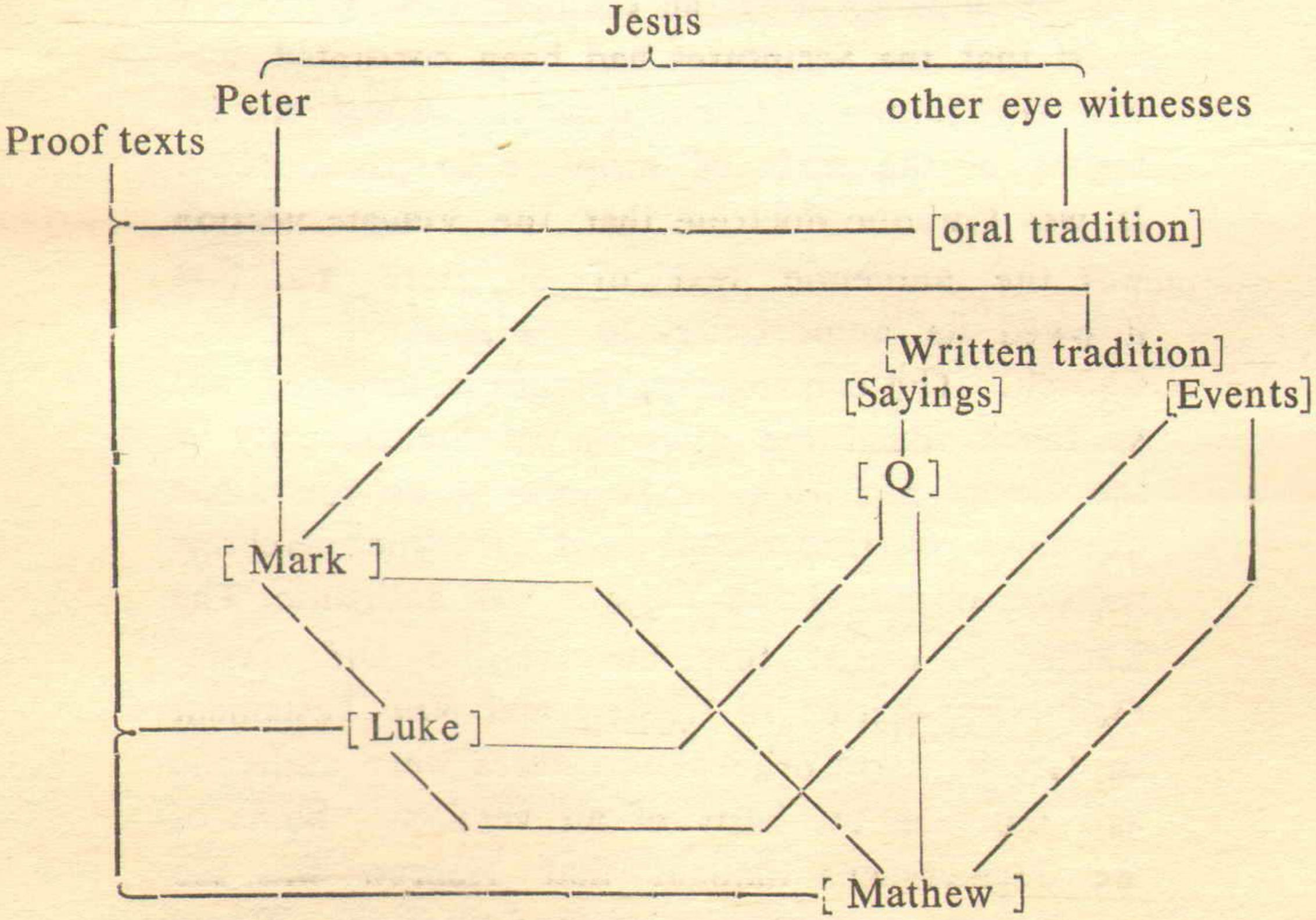
"Most Catholic teachers argued that the MSS Greek and Hebrew which we have today, however, can not be regarded as authentic because, after many years of copying, they have become corrupt and impure."[10]

But where are the originals of the present Scriptures with which translations can be compared? Nowhere are they available, and even if from Qumran Valley scrolls or elsewhere some documents older than the present ones which date about the 4th century A.D. are found they would probably be quite different and would clearly show that stories like those of Resurrection are the result of "myth making operation". Let us now see how the present books are estimated as to their origin, chronology, differences, authorship, language, contents etc. We start with the Structure of the Synoptic Gospels. The following chart can throw some light as to how it is thought that they were originated.



From "The Origin and Transmission of the New Testament" by L. D. Twilley B. D. 1957 page 26.

From the above chart it is evident that none of the three authors used written tradition and have depended upon hearsay only.

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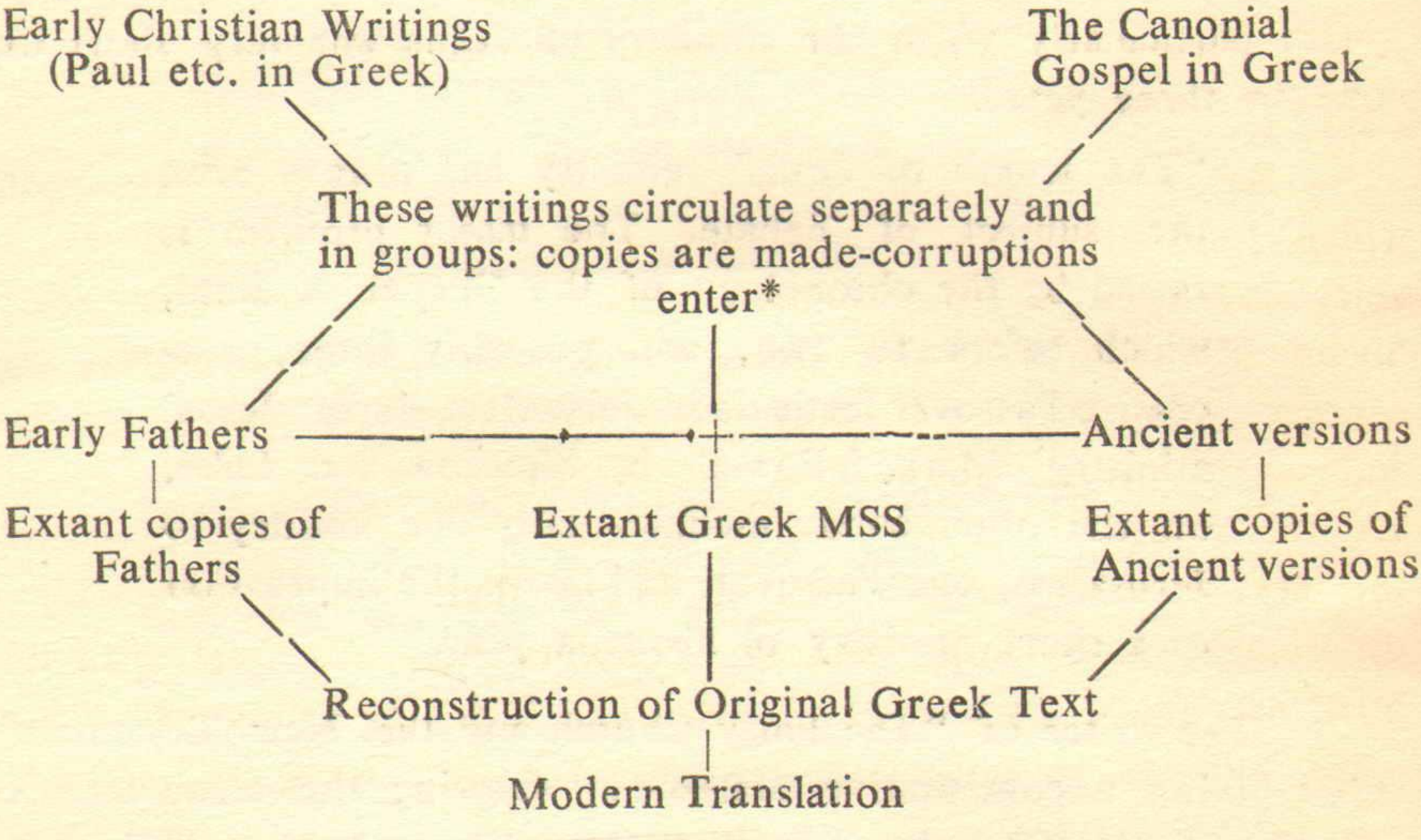
After dealing with the Synoptic Gospels now let us study another chart about the Text of the New Testament.



(From the same book page 51)

The writer of this chart has himself used the words "Corruptions enter" above at.

For any future reference let us also have the probable chronological order of the books of the New Testament:

"About A.D.

30.....The Crucifixtion.
50.....First Epistles of Paul.
62.....Last Epistles of Paul.
65—70.....Mark's Gospel.
70 ?.....Epistle to the Hebrews.
80.....Luke's Gospel.
85—90.....Matthew's Gospel.
90.....Acts.
90—100 ...John's Gospel and First Epistle.
95—100 ...Revelation.
100 ?... ...1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

James, 1 and 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude are all

so uncertain that we cannot place them in the above table, even approximately."[11]

It is clear from above that the first record ever made was in 50 A.D. i.e., 20 years after crucifixion. Now how can it be possible to remember the events correctly after so many years particularly when the ministry of Jesus was very short i.e. one to three years.

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"The length of Jesus' ministry has always been the subject of debate. The major problem is raised by the chronology of the Gospel of John, which refers to two, and probably three, successive Passover festivals in Jerusalem during Jesus' ministry...Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, includes only one journey to Jerusalem, one Passover, and leaves the impression of a short ministry of about a year."[12]

The writer of "The Early Church and the New Testament" after giving a comparative statement showing the characteristics of the three Gospels (Synoptic Gospels) and the differences between them writes :

"In the Passion Narrative Matthew gives details which are peculiar to himself, and these are as follows :

(a) Christ's word to Judas in Gethsemane.
(b) Juda's suicide.
(c) Pilate's wife's dream.
(d) Pilate washing his hands.
(e) The cry of the multitude "His blood be upon us and upon our children".
(f) The opening of the graves and the resurrection of the saints.
(g) The sealing of the tomb.

These details, with the exception of the first, are all far more characteristic of hearsay than of the evidence of an eye witness. Christ's word to Judas probably does come from a reliable source and may well represent a genuine tradition not known to Mark

or Luke. The remainder more probabaly illustrate the first beginning of Christian legend. These additions thus point to a comparatively late date for the Gospel and so also do the last verses of the last chapter which contain the command to '*make disciples of all nations*' and to baptise 'in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*'. These contain reference to the practices of the Church rather than a literal report of the words of Jesus. Baptism in the primitive Church, as *we can see from Paul's letters, was into the Name of Jesus only.*"[13]

Now let us see what reasons are given for corruption in the New Testament and how it occured :

> "The scribe may alter a text to agree with his theology. This is a very rare form of corruption, but was definitely employed by Marcion, a heretic. Thus from the very early times there was a very great variety of different readings of the text in existence. Early in the fourth century a certain scholar named Lucian carefully compared different readings of the New Testament with which he was acquainted and produced a revised form of the text..... This is also referred as Byzantine Text."[14]

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Another writer says :

> "We must guard also against the assumption that the New Testament as we have it today is in precisely the form in which it was originally written..... Possibly some small roll of papyrus of uncertain or unknown authorship, seemingly too valuable to lose, may have been inserted into the work of some author recognized and known. In other words, probably no single book in the New Testament of today is precisely as it was when it left the hands of its original writer. Nor must we fail to remember that the definite and final form of the New

Testament was not concluded and put into circulation as a book until more than three centuries after its first portions were written by St. paul."[15]

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Another writer says :

"We cannot too often remind ourselves that the Gospels were circulated in manuscript : editorial insertions and additions were easy : those which commended themselves gave credit to manuscript which served as the originals of future copies : and it must never be forgotten that, though earlier fragments have been found, none of our existing manuscripts of the New Testament goes back beyond the forth century of our era."[16]

The author of "The Early Church and the New Testament" while discussing Johannine literature on pages 198-200 and comparing some of the books of the New Testament says :

"John's version of the Resurrection Appearances is certainly distinctive, since even the opening verses are different from Marks (remember that nothing in Mark beyond 16 : 8 can be treated as part of the original Gospel). Since we must discount the end of Mark, and with it Matthew, there remain a few verses in Mark, Luke's Gospel, the Acts and Paul's letters with which a comparison may be made....."[17]

This means that the last verses of Mark's and Matthew's Gospels are additions since they are now discarded. Now here is something about the original language of the Gospel according to Matthew :

" 'Matthew' says Ireneus, 'wrote his Gospel in a Hebrew language in the midst of the Jews.' Papias says the same : 'Matthew set down in order the words of the Lord in a Hebrew dilect'. It is generally agreed today that the earliest version of St. Matthew's Gospel was written in Aramaic and in less connected form. This ear-

liest Gospel, this 'setting down in order the words of the Lord' as old bishop put in, was circulated zealously among the Christian community and each one, as Papias adds, 'translated it into the best of his ability'. The time came when the church wished to codify these translations and thus we have the official Greek version made very probably by the author himself. This version would be enlarged and completed, since by this time two other Gospels Mark and Luke, had appeared."[18]

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As regards the author of the Gospels, in the same book 'Early Church and the New Testament', it is written while mentioning the chronology of the various books ;

> "The Gospel according to St. John is later than either Mark or Luke, but it was probably written not very long after Matthew. (The author is unknown to us, just like Matthew.)"[19]

The authors (H. Clark Kee & F. W. Young) of the book "The Living World of New Testament", on pages 67-68, also write about the doubtfulness of the fourth Gospel and some other books :

> "Among the late writings of the New Testament are several others (the epistles of Peter and James) that were also written under the names of the earliest leaders of the Church ; yet their style and content make it clear that they were written at a later date. The three letters of John have traditionally been ascribed to the disciple John, but there is considerable doubt as to whether the John associated with these writings was the apostle John, a disciple of the apostle, or simply a leader in the Church of Asia Minor by the name John. Even the Gospel of John does not identify its author although it gives a prominent place to 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', who may or may

not have been the John the apostle'..... The claims of Jesus to Messiahship which are usully only implied or indirecily stated in the first three Gospels, are boldy proclaimed in the fourth gospel. It is clear, then, that the gospel that bears the name of John is more concerned with the significance of Jesus for Christian Faith than with what Jesus did or said".[20]

As regards Mark, E. W. Barnes writes :

"Who was Mark ? We do not know : he can hardly have been the cousin of Barnabas..... Stories told by Peter were used, possibly after they had filtered through the recollection of several persons, one after another.....We are thus left with the conclusion that the author of Mark was a Christian : and inasmuch as Aramaic appears to have been his mother tongue, a Jew."[21]

Now let us see what the Christian writers say about the various vital contents of the Christian faith :

"Bultmann now sees the whole problems as contained within the use by the New Testament authors of a completely mythical cosmology. Not only the accounts of supernormal events, such as the Virgin Birth, the miracles, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, but the entire Biblical outlook, conditioned (so it is claimed) by Jewish Apocalyptic and gnostic ideas of redemption, represent a mythological view of the universe which has passed away and which must be replaced by a new world-view before the Gospel becomes meaningful to the scientific age. We are no longer to ask, is this historically true ? or, can this statement be accepted at its face value ? Instead, we are to recognize that the New Testament writers, being children of their own age, employed modes of expression

and theological concepts which have ceased to be valid, and whose acceptance by the modern world can only result in a kind of schizophrenia."[23]

In the end let us see how far the discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls have affected Christianity. The book 'The Scrolls and the New Testament', 1957 edited by Kristel Stendahi is worth mentioning here. On pages 1 and 2 we read :

"Nevertheless , there can be no doubt that it is the very problem to which this volume addresses itself—the Scrolls and the New Testament which has been the catalyst responsible for the wide interest in the Qumran discoveries. It is as a potential threat to Christianity, its claims and its doctrines that the Scrolls have caught the imagination of layman and clergy.....But the success of his book (Edmond Wilsons' book 'The Scrolls from the Dead Sea') was due not only to his skill to tell the story but also to his intimations that these Scrolls had drastic ramifications for Christianity—that the rise of Christianity should, at last, be generally understood as an episode of human history rather than propagated as dogma and divine revelation'."[23]

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Islam — The Need of all times.

Abdus Salam Akhtar M.A.

The present century is sometimes called a Sceptical Century, for it involves doubt, not in the intellectual world alone, but in the moral world as well. Perhaps one could forego this, but when doubt is made a starting point for all enquiry, scientific or otherwise, reason has to stand and stare. Descartes, the initiater of the Age of Reason, started from doubt. He said, "*Corgito ergo Sum*", *i.e.* "I think, therefore I am". Thought, according to him, postulated a sort of a scepticism, without which argument and reasoning were impossible.

Scepticism, on the positive side, has doubtlessly, a value of its own. Doubt in the possibility of a life in the stars, leads a rational probe into the nature of satellites. But if this weapon is carried too far, without any attempt to resolve it, it may destroy the principles already established on reason and judgement. Of course we never mean, that the issues involved in controversy, even in religion or morality, should not be subjected to scrutiny. But life in suspense, or an attempt to evade responsibilities by taking advantage of the debate over important issues, is hardly commendable. The havoc which the modern mind has wrought, since it took a turn to scepticism, in the 18th century, for, that was the time when it did actually originate, has been well pictured by Carlyle. He says :

> "The eigteenth century was a *sceptical* century; in which little word, there is a whole Pandora's Box of miseries : all sorts of infidelity, insincerity, spiritual paralysis. Perhaps in few centuries one could specify since the world began, was a life of heroism more difficult for a man. That was not an age of Faith, an age of Heroes. The very possibility of Heroism had been abnegated in the minds of all. Heroism was gone for ever. Triviality, Formalism and common place were come for ever. The age of miracles had been or

perhaps had not been; but it was not any longer. An effete world, wherein wonder, Greatness, Godhood could not now dwell; in one world a godless world!"[1]

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Doubt, therefore, may be good as a start, but it certainly cannot be good as an end. Human nature itself can not perpetually live on doubt. Action, even on the part of the most insane, emanates with a line of ideas, of a peculiar and a definite type. The state of suspense is a mental process, not a physical reality. The fact that our physical organism occupies a definite place in time and space is an undeniable truth. This truth, however, simultaneously demands, that our body and soul must be mutually supplementry to each other. Just as our body is a definite reality in the world of matter, even so our soul should have a place and status in the spiritual world. But spiritual struggle can not continue, if it is based on doubt. That is why the Holy Quran, in the very beginning, lays emphasis on the word of God, saying that it is beyond doubt: God says:

ذالك الكتاب لاريب فيه هدى للمتقين

"This is a perfect Book; There is no doubt in it. It is a guidance for the righteous".

When the reader or a seeker-after truth comes to know that this word of God is final and indoubtable, he is filled with certitude, and he finds the first sure step, to go forward. Islam, as a matter of fact, is the unique religion in this world, which claims certainty and definiteness from the very start. It has a clear-cut goal, with a path, unhinged and unchequered by any metaphysical suspense.

Uncertainty in Christian Doctrines

Before we consider the singular attitude of Islam towards the world problems, and the anthenticity of its own doctrines, let us see how Christian theology faces the world crisis, under the various interpretations put on the Biblical concepts themselves. Here the views of no less a writer than Huston Smith may safely be quoted. He says,:

"On the Church as Teaching Authority, there is more difference, but even here the premises are the same. Left to private interpretation, the Christian faith would disintegrate into a babble of conflicting claims and uncertainties. It is the Church's responsibility to insure against this, and God enables it to do so. The Holy Spirit preserves its official statements against the possibility of error. This much is identical with Rome. The differences are two. One of these has to do with extent. The Eastern Church considers the issue on which unanimity is needed to be far fewer in number than does the Roman Church ..... The other way, in which the Eastern Church's understanding of its role as Teaching Authority differs from the Western pertains to the means, by which her dogmas are reached. The Roman Church, as we have seen holds that in the final analysis they come from the Pope. It is his decisions that the Holy Spirit preserves. The Eastern Church has no Pope; if we want the distinguishing difference, between the two Churches, that is it. Instead, it holds that 'God's Truth is disclosed through the conscience of the Church.' By this phrase it means, the consensus of Christians in general."[2]

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The reader will easily observe that Biblical injunctions so far as their character and import is concerned, are subject to serious differences even in matters of principle. The Roman Church, and the Eastern Church, the main authoritatve interpreting organizations, had a profound disparity in their views; the one recognizing Pope as the direct interpreting authority the other delegating such powers to the consensus of Christian opinion. A close observation, will however reveal that both the extremes are neither rational nor workable. If divine revelation, or interpretation of the text is restricted only to one man, the idea of the unrestricted benevolence of God, and that of unrestricted approach to Him, is frustrated. If, on the other hand, free latitude is given to one and all, and even the basic fundamental princi-

ples are left to 'consensus of opinion', the result will be heterogeneity of ideas. Unanimity and congruity as Huston says, shall be a a utopia. In fact, the whole of Christendom has come to plunge itself in this dilemma. They claim to have spiritual eminence embodied in one person, but their 'cansensus of opinion' goes against this authority. Yet, if we allow this consensus to rule, their conduct justifies neither the theory they preach, nor the authority they acknowledge.

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Discrepencies in the text form another reason why a religion cannot hold its sway universally and categorically. In Genesis we read,

> "And Abraham called the name that place Jehova-jireh, as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen". (Gen 22:14)

But in Exodus we read,

> "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto Him, I am the Lord, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, and by my name Jehova was I not known to them." (Exodus 6 : 2)

The contradiction between these two passages is quite obvious. The passage from Exodus says that the name Jehova, was first revealed to Moses. Before his time no prophet, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, had this name revealed to him. But the passage from Genesis says that this name was revealed even to Abraham, and that he named a mount after it Jehova-jireh.

The example cited above, will suffice to show that uncertainties in the interpretation of the text and discrepencies in the text itself bring the Christian theology to a disadvantage. Even though it acknowledges the verbal service of the majority of mankind, it has failed to sublime men to a level of spiritual eminence.

The Vedic Theory of Life Obsolete

When we talk of the Vedic theory of life, we mean the

general Hindu concept of living and its ideals and practices with regard to the problems of life. It is a pity that a large part of the Hindu population has no direct approach to Vedas themselves, partly because the Vedic language is now no longer in vogue, and partly because of the fact, that the Brahmans themselves considered vedic knowledge as their monopoly. The result was that whatever is now contained in the Vedas, is either a property of the few, or a thing of the past. Yet ellucidation of the Vedic text has come from the various commentators, Indians and non-Indians, to give some idea as to what the Ideal is. There are according to the Hindu analysis four general kinds of persons. Some are basically reflective ; others are primarily emotional. Still others are essentially active. Finally some are most accurately characterized as expirical or experimental. For each of these personality types, a distinct Yoga is recommended and designed to capitalize on the endowment at the individual's disposal.

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(1) *Jnana Yoga* is intended for spiritual aspirants who have a strong intellectual bent, for it is a path leading to oneness with the God-head through knowledge.

(2) *Bhakti Yoga* shows the aim of the seeker, which is to acquire communion with God, the geyser of love, that lies at the base of every heart.

(3) *Raja Yoga*, has been known in India as the 'royal road to re-integration'. Designed for persons who are basically scientific in bent, it is the way to God, through psychological experiment.

In addition to the classification of the above Yogic exercises, we have the law of *Karma*, which brings the logical fruits to all actions which we perform. It is peculiar to note, that Karma is almost a 'mechanism' itself. No amount of repentence or renunciation can suffice to wash away the repurcussions of an act, performed even unconsciouly or emotionally. The Hindu practice of usury and of hoarding the stocks, seems to be a psychological result of the rigidity of this law.

Islam Alone Solves the Riddle

From the consideration of the teachings of the two great

religions of the world, we would come to realize, that none of them offers a solution of the riddle of life. The day-to-day problems facing mankind viz. the atomic blasts, the economic dislocation, the population explosion, food-control and family planning are some of the hard nuts which are being created by man alone. Woefully, he feels that whatever he has done or committed, has to be resolved by means of his wits alone. Consciously or unconsciously, he has formed an idea that religion, history, and sociology, are at best only records of the past experience, and they have nothing to offer to solve the everbaffling mystery of the evolutionary process of this life. The habits of the human mind to look at the biological process of existence, from a purely physical point of view, and feel that the problems can be solved only by a mechanical effort, has given rise to a bent of mind which takes no account of religion at all. Thus Le Comte Du Nouy, a widely known French author, in his book, "Human Destiny", writes :

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> "To a biologist who knows how to look at nature, she is a constant source of wonder. She solved fantastic problems by means of varied solutions, and trying them for millions of years, she finally chose the best, that is the best adapted to the end. But the problems were the same problems which existed independently of the solutions. Throughout the development of evolution, the scientist finds himself facing this unaccountable mystery, the creation of organs, destined to improve sketchy solutions, so as to increase the freedom of the individual, his independence with respect to his environments".3

So, the biologist in particular, and the scientist in general, aim only at the freedom of the individual, and his independence with respect to his environment. They say they tried all the solutions, but the problems remained the same. Now they seem to be at their wits' end ; they feel that the mess their 'freedom' and 'independence' created, has involved them in toto. Let us turn to the Holy Quran, and see how God guides us :

قل من يرزقكم من السموات والارض قل الله وانا او
اياكم لعلىٰ هدى او فى ضلال مبين ـ

"Say ! 'Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth'.

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"Say ! Allah, either we or you are on right guidance or in manifest error".

Islam and World Population

A study of the above quoted Quranic verse indicates two points beyond doubt :—

(1) God is the Sustainer of this Universe.

(2) He has created various kinds of beings, and

He alone can nourish them ; those who deny this truth are in manifest error. Again God Almighty says :

لا تقتلوا اولادكم خشية املاق ـ نحن نرزقكم وايا كم
ان قتلهم كان خطاء كبيراً ـ

"Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and for you. Surely the killing of them is a great sin."

The Quranic verses manifest that what is generally termed as 'Over-population', is no problem at all. When a child is born in this world, God being the Sustainer, He alone provides ways and means for his nourishment and development. In fact, a very important truth is contained in these lines, and that is that the heavens and the earth are full of such commodities, which serve as a source for the nourishment of the child. In other words, the birth of a child inspires the father to go and search for things, which are already there. In one way, therefore, the growth of a family becomes a cause of the growth of the state, as well as the state resources.

Our economists mourn the speed of population increase in this world, but they forget, that a child may be born with a genius of discovery and invention, paving the way for the employment of thousands. Who can deny the possibility of this

earth unfolding its hidden treasures to man? Then who is going to benefit by these treasures? If we do not allow the population to grow, I am afraid, we shall be putting a dead line to the growth of our own resources. In the present time, China, I suppose, has a greater population per square mile than any of the nighbouring countries, but the social and political status of China exceeds far beyond that of her neighbouring countries.

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Islam And International Justice

Another very important feature of International politics is the way, a victor behaves towards the vanquished, or a nation with mightier resources, towards a nation with lessor ones. Christianity, Buddhism, and Vedantism, are silent over this issue, except inculcating a few hints on individual piety and abstinence. But the Holy Quran guides us fully in this sphere also:

يا ايها الذين آمنوا كونوا قوامين لله شهداء بالقسط
ولا يجرمنكم شنان قوم على الا تعدلوا اعدلوا هو اقرب للتقوى

> "O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity, and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness, and fear Allah. Surely Allah is aware of what you do."

This Quranic verse clearly shows the examplary attitude, which a Muslim state ought to adopt towards her nighbours. The reader will see, that a group of people, who pledge in the name of God to keep up the principle of justice are bound by such regulations that a slight deviation is likely to lead them to the wrath of God Almighty and this is what they can never bear. A truly Muslim state vows to act according to the dictates of Almighty, and as long as such regulations are in force, no nation can fear her neighbour.

Not to speak of a Muslim state in particular, if any state undertakes to abide by this international code, the world is likely

to enjoy longer moments of peace, than what it is doing to day. In another verse of the Holy Quran, God says:

ولو لا دفع الله الناس بعضهم ببعض لهدمت صوامع وبيع
وصلواة ومساجد يز كرفيها اسم الله كثيرا و ينصرن الله
من ينصره ان الله لقوى عزيز .

"And if Allah did not repel some men, by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques, where in the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah, will surely help one, who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful and Mighty".

This verse points out a fine example of a very noble spirit of toleration and fellow-feeling. Here, as anyone can see, reference to mosques is made after the reference to churches and synagogues, which means that the Muslim lives can also be risked on the safety of non-Muslim places of worship. This example of mutual amity, is hardly traceable elsewhere, in any book of any other religion.

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Pages in the history of Islam, abound with the glowing examples of toleration and philanthropy, for anyone can see, that the instructions issued by the Islamic *Khalifa*, Hazrat Abu Bakar, and Hazrat Omar, contained this strict precaution, that no place of worship, not even a fruit-bearing tree, was to be molested by the conquering Muslim army. Even the most bigoted continentel historians, cannot afford to ignore this historical fact.

Islam in the Present age.

The present age is replete with problems unheared of, in the preceding times, for now the economic dislocation, atomic blasts, racial superiority, and political ideologies have so baffled the modern mind, that it is not prepared to think of any object, exeept avoiding the catastrophe, which seems imminent. Thus Bertrand Russell, in his essay, "What life has taught me", says:

"Through science, the world has become one community, which has to choose between common ruin and

common Prosperity. But it is yet an archaic community, destitute of government filled with hatred and suspicion, profoundly obsessed with the archaic belief, that one man's gain must be another man's loss. Under the stress of misfortune, passions have grown more violent, and fear has increasd mutual suspicion. Jews and Arabs, Hindus and Muslims, Chinese communists and Chinese Nationalists carry on their little wrangles, while the dispute between Washington and Moscow threatens to reconcile them all in a common grave. The new danger is so vast and so terrible, that men shrink from allowing themselves to realize it."

In this warning, the conscientious writer, has two things uppermost in his mind :

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(1) the mutual wrangles of nations and peoples.

(2) The threat of communist clash with the free countries of the world.

Now if we read the following verse of the Holy Quran :

يا ايها الناس انا خلقنا كم من ذكر و انثى وخلقنا كم
شعوباً وقبائل لتعارفوا ان اكرمكم عندالله اتقا كم ـ

"O! mankind, we have created you from a male and female, and we have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous among you". (49 : 14)

The above verse deals comprehensively with the idea of permanent peace in this world, by establishing most cordial relations with the peoples, parties, and tribes, among themselves. The idea is that no superiority is to be recognized, unless it is founded on piety, righteousness, and devotion. All distinctions of colour, caste, creed, and culture evaporate before the solid rock of hearty attachment to God. Islam is unique in this

respect, that it allows even an individual of the most backward race, to be the leader or the '*Imam*' of the prayers, if he is righteous and true at heart. Among all the sects of Islam, the "*Imamat*", or the leadership in prayers is no prerogative of heredity or profession. A new convert to Islam, even though he may have led a most sinful life, before his conversion, is competent to lead the prayers. There can hardly be a better example of genuine democracy anywhere in this world, than the one presented by Islam, in the principles of its social set-up.

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